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Central American Indians and The Bible

W. F. JORDAN

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Central American Indians and the Bible

By
W. F. JORDAN
Secretary, Upper Andes Agency of the American Bible Society

ILLUSTRATED

With Introduction by
W. REGINALD WHEELER
Executive Secretary, Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions

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Introduction

THERE is a rising tide of interest in the more adequate Christian service of the Indians of Latin America. The need for this service can be no longer ignored. Mr. Jordan brings the truth before us when he writes: "Indian America includes the greatest stretch of unevangelized territory in the world"; "What the Indian becomes, Mexico, Gautemala, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia will become. . . . Thrilling and inspiring will be the narrative of Christian faith, sacrifice and service that shall win these millions for the Master."

In the battle for justice and freedom and light now being waged on behalf of these Indians of Latin America, Mr. Jordan has stood in the front rank. His weapon has been invariably the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. For seventeen years he has been in the service of the American Bible Society, having been in charge of the agencies of that Society successively in the West Indies, in Mexico, in Central America, and in the upper Andes. He has been especially touched by the needs of the Indians in these regions, and has given vivid expression to those needs. His books include "Crusading in the West Indies" and

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"Glimpses of Indian America." This latest volume, entitled *Central American Indians and the Bible,* deals more especially with Christian work among the Indians of Central America, specifically those of Gautemala, El Salvador and Panama.

The reader of this book cannot fail to be impressed by the appealing needs of these Indians, who in times past have endured "immemorial infamies, perfidious wrongs, immedicable woes"; many of whom even today live in pseudo-slavery, in economic peonage, the badge of their serfdom the cow-hide strap or tump-line that extends from forehead to back, upon their backs "the burdens of the world."

The reader will also be impressed by the heroic work being done on behalf of these Indians by such missionaries as W. C. Townsend and Paul Burgess in Gautemala, and E. S. Alphonse in Panama, who, in the spirit and method of their service, are revealing today all the unconquerable courage and fortitude of the conquistador and the pioneer.

But the chief impression will be that of the brave and true response made by the Indians when the "good news" and the "good Book" are offered to them,—a response of simple people to the simple truth of the Word of God. We read of one who hears the Parable of the Lost Sheep and says, "I am that lost sheep and I want to come into the fold"; of one who anticipates the word of the itinerant evangelist,—"It is hard to wait. I am

hungry for it!"; of an Indian league, every member of which promises not to let a day pass without speaking to someone about Christ; of Juan Allon, who left his home in Bolivia to go to far-away Gautemala for training in the Indian Bible Institute there for the Christian service of his Bolivian brothers.

The response of these simple people is a challenge to us who have heard the Word so often, but who so often do not respond, and is a summons to us to do our part in making possible the sharing with these Indian peoples "the wonder-working Book, of which we have never been deprived, but which they have never yet possessed."

W. Reginald Wheeler.

156 Fifth Ave.,
New York City.

Foreword

INTENSELY fascinating is the story of the Red Man; this new-old race that comes into the ken of Old World civilization and thought with the discovery of America. So long separated from the rest of mankind had been the peoples inhabiting the new-found continent, that their very existence was ignored by those from whom they had parted, and all history of the former connection had been lost from their own legends and folk lore.

True Christian thought has always recognized in the Indians of the New World a race of common divine origin, lost and alienated through sin, but included in the "whosoever" for whom the Father's love sent the Son into the world, to whom is to be carried the Christian message together with all the benefits resulting from belief in a common fatherhood, a common brotherhood and a common destiny for all who believe in the "Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

The Spaniards were first on the field in this New World. On the temperate tablelands they found agricultural civilizations in some respects superior to their own, especially so in the paternal governmental care that extended to the humblest member of the community and saw that none suffered for

the necessities of existence. The discoverers were commissioned by their sovereign to evangelize the heathen, and priests accompanied the conquerors for that purpose. Greed, however, and lust for power were more potent than the religion of the day. The advanced native races of the highlands were treacherously treated, ruthlessly subdued, and cruelly enslaved. A mad fanaticism destroyed their temples and strove to abolish every vestige of a record of their past. The more primitive nomads fled to the fastnesses of the tropical jungle, where their descendants still hunt and fish with the bow and arrow and subsist almost entirely upon the natural products of the uncultivated forest.

The Northern Indian was of a different type. Nomadic or semi-nomadic, he lived by the chase and was frequently on the warpath against competitors for the right to occupy the rich hunting-grounds. The attitude of the settlers in the North toward the Indian varied from just treatment to the prosecuting of wars of extermination against them. At such times, in the language of the day, "the only good Indian was a dead Indian." In the United States and Canada the Indian eventually became a ward of the Government. His numbers in these countries do not make him a serious political or economic factor, and his ultimate fate seems to be that of absorption into the life of the nation whose predominant characteristics he will not perceptibly modify.

South of the Mexican border, however, the case

is very different. Here, the Indian constitutes the mass of the population and his is the prevailing type. Inured to hardship by four centuries of servitude, during which he has been looked upon as little better than a beast of burden he is physically destined to be the survivor. What the Indian becomes, Mexico, Guatemala, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia will ultimately become.

Thrilling, indeed, is the story of the audacity of the handful of Spanish adventurers who, staking their all, set forth to subjugate to the crown of Spain and reduce to slavery the opulent Aztec, Maya and Inca kingdoms. Even more thrilling and inspiring will be the narrative of Christian faith, sacrifice and service that shall win these millions for the Master. Subdued and enslaved these unsophisticated American nations were; exploited, they are to this day; they have never been won nor helped. The true conquest of the New-World races has yet to be made and its story written. But when it is recorded, it will be more fascinating than the volumes of Prescott.

The unevangelized Indian peoples of Latin America present a constant challenge to consecrated Christian youth. The spirit of adventure, the self-reliant tenacity of purpose of the pioneer, the audacity that attempts the impossible, together with the faith that sees its accomplishment are pre-eminently qualities of youth, and will all be needed in the establishment of the institutions that must

inevitably accompany the successful preaching of the Gospel.

In Central America and Panama are to be found the three types of Indians that await evangelization in Latin America; (1) the Europeanized peon who has adopted the language and customs of the conqueror and needs no longer to be considered separately in the work of evangelization since he is reached through the Spanish language, (2) the agricultural serf of the tableland, ignorant of the Spanish language, treated as personal property of the landowner and still looked upon as a pack-animal by the ruling class; (3) the scattered primitive forest tribes of the hot, miasmic lowlands. The object of the following stories, gathered recently while visiting Central America in the interests of the work of the American Bible Society, is to show that all three types are responsive to Gospel effort on their behalf.

Some of the material here presented has already appeared in *The Christian Herald* and *The Christian Endeavor World* and thanks are due the editors of these papers for allowing me to reproduce it here. The little book goes forth with a prayer that it may prove a contribution toward helping us to sense the opportunity for Christian service presented by these needy peoples, and to catch the vision of the strong-charactered Christian nations, into which they may develop if we but carry on. W. F. J.

Bible House,
Cristobal, Canal Zone.

Contents

I. A Scrap of Paper Starts Things in Gautemala 13

II. William Cameron Townsend: Pioneer Missionary to the Cakchiquels 18

III. Power of the Memorized Bible Verse 26

IV. Some Cakchiquel Centers and Outstanding Converts 32

V. Paul Burgess and the Quiches . . 45

VI. Some First Fruits of Quiches . . 50

VII. The Badge of Serfdom 58

VIII. Among the Mixed Race 64

IX. Gautemala Sends Its First Missionary to the Indians of Bolivia . . 73

X. E. S. Alphonse and the Forest Indians of Panama 78

I

A SCRAP OF PAPER STARTS THINGS IN GUATEMALA

DEJECTED and discouraged, a Cakchiquel Indian, was making his way home to Santa Catarina, Guatemala. He was returning from a visit to the witch doctor. The cause of his dejection was the illness of one of his children, following the recent death of another after a long period of similar suffering. He was discouraged because, in spite of all of his efforts and faithful following of the directions of the witch doctor, the child continued to decline.

The witch doctor had assured Silverio, the Indian father, that the sickness was caused by the unrest of the spirits of his forefathers, who had taken up their abode in the abdomen of the child, causing the abnormal swelling. In order to pacify these restless spirits the father must burn candles before the nearest volcano, under sacred trees, and within the chapel of the local saint at Antigua. In the case of the first child, the candle-burnings had all proved useless, and the stricken father had no reason to hope that they would be more effective in saving the life of the little one who was now suffering.

Silverio was dissatisfied with the witch doctor. When the first child had been taken sick the man had promised relief if his directions were faithfully followed. Now he promised relief again, but he had given the same prescription. However, there was no alternative; Silverio must follow the directions of the witch doctor, because he, alone, was supposed to know causes hidden from common people. Therefore, more candles must be burned, more pilgrimages made to prescribed shrines and more money paid out from the father's scanty earnings with no assurance whatever in his own mind that any good would come of it all. Meanwhile his beloved child was suffering and growing weaker day by day,—modern medical science for the Indian of Latin America is non-existent.

As Silverio proceeded sadly on his journey his downcast eyes caught sight of a fluttering piece of paper. Curiosity prompted him to pick it up and he began laboriously to spell out the printed words. In his boyhood he had learned his letters but had never profited much from the acquired knowledge, and the Spanish in which the words and sentences on the paper were printed was still a foreign language to him.

The scrap of paper was a leaf of one of the Gospels containing the account of Jesus turning the mercenaries out of the Temple. The words used by our Lord on that occasion stuck like a barbed arrow in Silverio's memory—"It is written, my house

shall be called a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves." The statement seemed to have an apt application to the subject of his thoughts. The witch doctors who professed to be his spiritual leaders had repeatedly taken his money and given him nothing in return. They were thieves indeed. The sentiment expressed fitted his present mood exactly.

Showing a friend the torn leaf, he was told that it was a part of the Bible. Years before Silverio had purchased a Bible from a traveling colporter, but he had never been able to get any satisfaction from reading it because of his deficiency in the knowledge of Spanish. He had therefore put the book away and had almost forgotten that he owned a Bible. The curiosity aroused by the scrap of paper prompted him to dig up again, from the bottom of the box where it was stored, this book which contained the statement that had made such an impression upon his mind.

Silverio knew that the Protestants believed the Bible contained a message from God. He decided what to do. He would take the treasured book to Isidro Alarcón, the nearest Protestant pastor, who lived four miles away in Antigua, the ancient capital of Guatemala. He would ask him to explain its meaning.

In Mr. Alarcón the poor Indian found a sympathetic friend. The faithful pastor not only explained the meaning of the text in question, but also

preached Christ to his visitor, told Silverio so earnestly of His love that he not only believed and received comfort in his own soul, but enlisted at once in the service of his newly-found Master. Learning of the child's illness and mistrusting the cause, Mr. Alarcón gave a simple remedy that soon disposed of the parasites that were causing the trouble attributed by the witch doctor to the spirits of his ancestors.

Immediately on his return home, Silverio began to preach Jesus to his fellow-townsmen in the twin Indian municipalities of Santa Catarina and San Antonio. Such a complete change was there in his life and so effectively did he testify to the power of Christ to save, that within one month forty men and women were converted. This little group of new converts sent in an earnest appeal to the Central American Mission for a pastor to be located among them. Thus began the Indian work of that Mission in Guatemala. At the time of the writer's visit, Silverio Lopez was pastor of five Indian congregations. A fifteen-year-old son, who accompanies him and plays the folding organ that he carries with him on his itineraries, is also preparing to devote his life to the work of teaching. Great things for Silverio Lopez, his family and his people, date from the thoughtful perusal of that fragmentary message.

The Indian town of San Antonio has become the center of a large and rapidly growing work. The number of Indian believers has increased in a short time to more than two thousand. In the attempt to

meet the need of the Cakchiquel Indians and enter the open door for their evangelization, there have been established an orphanage and boarding school for the children of the converts and a hospital, with several beds, in charge of a nurse who holds a daily clinic and ministers to such sufferers as come for treatment. A modest chapel and a home for the missionaries have also been built. A school for the training of native Indian evangelists has been established at Panajachel, an Indian town in sight of beautiful Lake Atitlán. Two Indian translators, working under missionary direction and supported by the American Bible Society, are busy at the task of translating the New Testament into their own tongue, thereby adding another to the many languages in which the printed Word is being circulated. The Gospel of John, made on a mimeograph, has appeared as the first book ever published in Cakchiquel. The other Gospels together with the Book of Acts are already in manuscript and undergoing final revision before publication in book form.

II

WILLIAM CAMERON TOWNSEND: PIONEER MISSIONARY TO THE CAKCHIQUELS

HOW it thrills one to meet the pioneer, the man who not only has had visions and dreamed dreams, but who has had sufficient faith in the visions and the dreams to dedicate his life to bringing them to pass. Such a man is William Cameron Townsend, formerly of California, now of Panajachel, Guatemala. We first learned of him in 1917, when, as a colporter, he was itinerating Central America on foot accompanied by an Indian carrier, and subsisting on a mere pittance of twenty-five dollars a month. Since then we have followed his career as he has blazed the trail among the Cakchiquel Indians of Guatemala. Recently I have been permitted to meet and travel with him, visiting group after group of Indian Christians ingathered, largely, as a result of his ministry.

Having decided to become a missionary, William Townsend left college at the close of his junior year. He wished to acquire some practical experience before proceeding further with his studies. A year on his chosen field, he thought, would give him a better

idea of just what he most needed in order to complete his missionary preparation. His college course remains incomplete. He has not yet found a stopping-place in his missionary activities.

The first twenty months in Central America were spent in the work of distributing Testaments, Gospels, and tracts. Three times during this period Mr. Townsend made the journey on foot from Guatemala City to El Salvador, the capital of the neighboring Republic, each time taking a different route. On these trips he met, conversed with, and preached to all classes, from the humblest Indian peon to governors of provinces. He also made a journey on muleback through Honduras and Nicaragua. He carried no food supplies but always subsisted on corn cakes and black beans secured from the natives and slept wherever night overtook him, whether in the country home of the wealthy planter, on the porch of the one-roomed shack of the peon, or in the vermin-infested hut of the Indian.

As a result of the experiences acquired on his Bible distributing trips Mr. Townsend knows the whole country as do few others. After studying the situation and considering the subject from every angle, he came to the conclusion that from a missionary viewpoint the Indians were the key to the situation in Guatemala. They constitute two-thirds of the population and have a physique, a stability of character, and a persistence not possessed by those

of Spanish blood. Aside from the work done by Dr. Paul Burgess of the Presbyterian Mission among the Quichés of Quezaltenango little organized effort had been made to reach them. Missionary endeavor had heretofore been chiefly directed to evangelizing the Ladino, as the mixed race of that country is called.

The Cakchiquels constitute some 200,000 of the 1,250,000 Indians in Guatemala. At the time of the Spanish conquest they were the most warlike of the Central American tribes and offered the greatest resistance to the Spaniards. They had made remarkable progress in civilization. Part of their religion consisted in the worship of the maize plant, and it is thought that they were the people who first redeemed it from its wild state and reduced it to cultivation. The world, therefore, probably owes these Indians a greater debt than it can ever repay.

After their conquest in 1524 the Cakchiquels, along with other Indians of Guatemala, were exploited with merciless cruelty. Las Casas avers in his history that between four and five million perished as a result of the cruel and barbarous treatment to which they were subjected. In spite of laws placed from time to time on the statute books, ostensibly intended for his protection, the Indian of Guatemala is still looked upon as the personal property of the landlord, considered a beast of burden, and occupies a position a little better than that of

slavery. He is transferred with the land that belonged to his forefathers,—is practically bought and sold. Not an uncommon advertisement in the newspapers of Guatemala is:

"FOR SALE—Plantation with its Indians.
Owner going to Europe."

One of these Cakchiquel Indians had accompanied Mr. Townsend on his evangelistic and Bible-selling trips, and this man's mental and spiritual progress, as soon as he was treated as a man instead of a beast of burden, had demonstrated the possibilities of the Indian character and had inspired the young missionary with a great desire to take them the Gospel. His own denomination having no work in the section occupied by the Cakchiquels, Mr. Townsend applied to the Central American Mission which already had a few small congregations of Indian believers. Mr. A. E. Bishop, the superintendent of the Mission, had long been looking for a man adapted to this particular work, and Mr. Townsend's application was accepted. Entire charge of the work among these Indians has since been given him.

Soon after his appointment to the Indian work of the Central American Mission, Mr. Townsend was married to Miss E. Malmstrom of the Presbyterian Mission of Guatemala City. The Ladino town of Antigua, the old Spanish capital, was first chosen as headquarters because of its being the administrative and market center for a large and densely-populated

Indian section. The Townsends soon found, however, that so long as they lived among the Ladinos it would be impossible for them to get into sympathetic contact with the Indians. They were so far removed from them, socially, that they seemed to be made of different clay and to be living in a different world. Mr. and Mrs. Townsend decided on heroic measures. Five miles away was the large Indian town of San Antonio-Aguas-Calientes. Here was a congregation of Indian believers and here lived Silverio Lopez, the successful Indian evangelist. They would establish their home in San Antonio. Here they would be right among the people they were trying to reach and still not too far from the center of the District.

But, how to secure a house? No one in the Indian village was willing to rent or sell to a white man. Finally, without waiting for the action of the Mission Board, Mr. Townsend seized the opportunity to buy a small piece of land and began to build on it a most simple little house with sides and partitions of corn-stalks, roof of secondhand tiling, a rough board floor, and no ceiling. The cost of this humble home when completed was but seventy dollars, which amount was donated by the native congregation of Guatemala City.

With great curiosity and interest, the Indians watched the progress of the work on the building that was to house their missionary. Seeing the uprights that Mr. Townsend placed at different points

in the interior of the framework, they were puzzled and ridiculed them. They said that these posts would not serve any purpose and would only be in the way. When he came, however, to put in the partitions attached to these uprights, they saw the purpose of them. Strange to say the Indians even approved of the idea of separate rooms. Although they had never before had any in their own houses, they themselves are now beginning to separate with light partitions the interior of their own one-roomed barnlike shacks, a first step to a higher plane of living. Four hundred years of contact with his European oppressors had not made the Indian wish to adopt the custom of living in a partitioned house. A single house built in his midst by one who loved him made him wish to live in one like it.

Soon after the Townsends moved to San Antonio, prejudice against them began to break down. Their untiring attendance on the sick during epidemics of influenza and malaria convinced the Indian that the missionaries were his true friends. Before long more land was secured, and through the help of a boyhood Sunday School teacher who had learned of the work of her former pupil, more substantial buildings were erected. The Mission property now consists of a small chapel, a day-school building, a house for the missionary in charge, a home for the fifty boarding pupils from surrounding Indian villages, and a hospital building. The same building that houses the boarding pupils serves as a home

for the lady missionaries who have joined the Townsends in the work.

While Mr. and Mrs. Townsend no longer live in their first corn-stalk home, this is still in service, being occupied by a worker and some boy students. As I visited this primitive dwelling and realized the self-effacement necessary to make happy in it red-blooded Americans who had been accustomed to physical comfort, I did not wonder that success had attended the efforts of this young couple. They had willingly spent two years of patient waiting for better things while occupied with the tremendous task of acquiring an unwritten language, learning the psychology of a strange people and the meaning of peculiar customs, as well as winning the friendship of a suspicious non-Christian community.

The Cakchiquel work has grown beyond all expectations. Twenty Indian converts have expressed their desire to become preachers. These enthusiastic students meet every other month at the school for Indians in Panajachel to study under missionary teachers the things that will help them to become more efficient in their work. The alternate months are spent in preaching and evangelizing.

The large number of Cakchiquel converts has made increasingly important the translation of the Gospel into their tongue. The Mission Board has recently released Mr. Townsend from all other duties until the translation of the New Testament shall be completed. Besides this volume, which will be

published by the American Bible Society, he is also at work on a manuscript grammar and dictionary of the Cakchiquel language, a pioneer enterprise of greatest importance in the task of "teaching all nations." It is the work of such pioneers that has given the world the "Good News" in over seven hundred languages and dialects. May their numbers increase until all of the many doors opening throughout Central and South America shall have been entered and none of the numerous Indian tribes can say "We have never heard," for each one shall have welcomed its pioneer apostle.

III

POWER OF THE MEMORIZED BIBLE VERSE

WE were drawing near Cajahualten, the end of the first stage of our muleback journey from San Antonio to Panajachel, Guatemala, and I listened eagerly to the story of the beginning of the work in this place where we were about to spend the night.

Five years before during an evangelistic tour, Mr. Townsend and Mr. Treichler found themselves on an unknown trail in this mountain gorge. They were evidently quite lost. It was late in the afternoon and night would soon overtake them. There was no danger, but the thought of spending the night on the cold mountain side without shelter, and with nothing but the single blanket each carried to keep out the piercing chill, was anything but pleasant. Fortunately they met a man who proved to be an Indian convert. He told them of a nearby hamlet of which they had never heard. The people there, he said, were very much interested in the "Good News." Thankful that their immediate needs would be met, and that they would at least find food and shelter, the weary travelers gladly

accepted the offer of the Indian to guide them to the place.

On their arrival at the group of huts the missionaries met with a cordial welcome. Their hearts were cheered by the glad hospitality offered, though it consisted of but the coarsest fare and an opportunity to sleep on the bare floor of one of the primitive one-roomed dwellings. When they announced their willingness to hold a service, word was sent out into the neighborhood and a congregation of eager listeners gathered, and the joy of preaching the Gospel to a group who had never before heard a missionary was theirs. The testimony of the converted Indian had, however, been seed sown in good ground and the harvest was ready for reaping. Fourteen Indians, then and there, took the first public step in the Christian life.

One of those who made their first public confession the night of the missionaries' visit was Cixto Guajan. Some time previously Cixto had intended celebrating the festival of his saint. In Guatemala, as in many other countries, it is customary to name children after some saint in the Roman calendar. The image or picture of the saint, after being duly baptized by the nearest priest in return for an adequate fee, is set up in the home and becomes the protecting deity of the individual bearing its name. Instead of celebrating their own birthdays each year, they celebrate the festival of the image. The Indian believes that he honors his idol by getting

drunk on the day of its festival: the idol is grieved if he does not get very drunk. A poor Cakchiquel Indian woman, crawling along the road was urged to go home and sober up.

"I am doing this for the Virgin Mary," she said, indignant that she should be thought to be getting drunk and disgracing herself for her own pleasure.

Cixto was on his way to see if he could borrow the money he needed for this drunken celebration when he met the same Christian Indian who guided our lost missionaries to the hamlet. The man preached the Gospel to Cixto and told him that God was not pleased with drunkenness. The message that stuck in Cixto's heart and memory was the statement that God was everywhere, and that he, ignorant as he was, could pray to Him in his own home, in the field, anywhere. Cixto was so impressed by this simple message that he returned home without attempting to borrow the money with which to get drunk. Going away by himself he got on his knees to pray, and remained there until comfort came to his soul. He then began to talk to his brother-in-law, an older man, about his new faith. The brother-in-law became very angry.

"So the cursed evangelists are after you?" he said. "I will kill them if they come to my house."

Both Cixto and his brother-in-law were among those converted at that first Christian service in Cajahualten.

Poor Cixto was ignorant, inexperienced, and un-

lettered. His former friends united in persecuting him and in assuring him that he had been deceived by the foreigners. He began to wonder if, after all, he had done right? One day while hoeing in his little bean-patch on the mountain side, he decided to settle the matter by prayer.

"O Lord," he cried, "If the Gospel is not true, show me; and if it is true, make it plain to me so that I can explain it to others."

At the next preaching he received the answer to his prayer. He caught, understood, and memorized his first Bible verse:

"For God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

The next day, as his only answer to his persecutors' jibes, Cixto repeated this verse. He improved every opportunity to attend a preaching-service, and each time learned some new Bible-verse. During the interval between services, he would evangelize his fellow-Indians with the verses learned. He became a very effective worker and the rest of his career was characterized by his readiness to quote Scripture-texts and his skill in applying them. In eighteen months he had learned to read and had married a Christian girl who was able to play a folding organ. Cixto and his young wife then toured the country together, on foot, as colporter evangelists, he carrying the folding organ on his back from place to place. After two years of this

work, the Lord took him home. His young widow continued in the work, and is now helping in the mission hospital in San Antonio.

As my companion, Mr. Townsend, finished the story we were met by some Indians with the news that the old trail had been destroyed by a landslide and that they had come to show us the way around. So rough was this new trail that we were obliged to dismount and lead our mules.

Arriving at the chapel just after dark, we found awaiting us a group of twenty-four Christian Indians. The grass-thatched building in which the service was held belonged to our host, José Chate. The hero of "The Scrap of Paper," and pastor of this, as well as four other growing congregations, was my interpreter. His son was there with the baby organ. The humble room was lighted by rude, home-made, beeswax candles suspended from the rafters by means of strings and bent wires. Under these circumstances I addressed my first Indian congregation in Guatemala, assured that the more abundant entrance of the Word would bring increased light, both physical and spiritual.

When the congregation had dispersed we placed the benches together for a bed, and Mr. Townsend spread on the seats the cornstalks that we were to feed the mules in the morning. While these were not particularly soft, they served to break the unyielding monotony of the boards. Spreading over the cornstalks our ponchos and blankets, we retired

to pass a night of visions of spiritual opportunities —although not of physical comfort. In the morning, after partaking of some beans, coffee, tortillas, and honey provided by our host, we set out on the road to Comalapa, a large Indian town that was opened to the Gospel message by the humble Cixto Guajan, whose memorized texts were so signally blessed to himself and others.

IV

SOME CAKCHIQUEL CENTERS AND OUTSTANDING CONVERTS

COMALAPA is the largest purely Indian City in Guatemala. We approached the town just before nightfall, and the groups of women coming from the public fountain with water pots on their heads gave it a closer resemblance to the large villages of British India than any other place I have seen in the Western World.

A PAGAN CITY

Until the arrival of the Bible colporter Comalapa was wholly idolatrous. In this town the primitive Indian custom of stealing the wife still prevails. A young Indian, having decided that he would like a certain girl for his home, confides this to a male friend, and the two lie in wait for her as she passes along the road in company with some older woman or companions engaged in carrying water or in some other service. The young men rush unexpectedly upon the girl and if too much resistance is not made by her companions, drag and carry her off bodily to the home of the suitor. Then follows a series of palavers between the father of the young

man and the parents of the girl. Generally an agreement is arrived at by which the father of the girl receives a certain sum of money and relinquishes the daughter. Sometimes, however, they fail to agree. In such a case the father of the boy pays damages for the outrage, and the girl returns to her parents.

The idolatry of the Indians of Comalapa is not that of the philosopher who reverses the image because of the superior being represented in it. No, the image worshipped by the Guatemalan Indian, however grotesque, ugly, or mutilated it may be, is the very god itself. Their witch doctors are of two kinds, significantly called in their own language the "Priests of the Sun" and the "Priests of the Devil." And as their names would lead one to believe, the priests of the sun are less vicious than those of the devil. The practice of the former consists largely in divining the cause of sickness and giving advice as to which images, volcanoes, trees, or stones must be appeased by burning candles and incense in order to obtain relief. The priests of the devil are called upon to exorcise evil spirits and are supposed to have the power to bewitch their enemies. These priests of the devil are much feared.

As we went through the town Mr. Townsend pointed out that idol shrines abounded in Comalapa as in no other town he had seen. These shrines are little houses situated on the street. They frequently

occupy a corner lot and are filled with images before which candles are kept burning. But their evil influence is beginning to wane before the light shed by the BOOK, even though up to the present the message has come in a strange tongue. How much greater things may we expect when the message of love reaches them in the familiar language of the home.

In Comalapa is spoken the purest Cakchiquel dialect; that is, with the least admixture of Spanish words. For this reason the language of this city is being taken as the standard for the Bible translation work now under way. Before final correction, the manuscript is being read to intelligent groups of Indians in Comalapa in order to make sure that no words or expressions have crept into it that will prevent the message being understood by isolated groups of Indians who have not come in contact with Spanish civilization.

A LONG WAIT

Ventura Otzoy, of Comalapa, purchased his first Bible from a colporter twenty years ago. He could not read, but bought the Bible out of curiosity because of the Spanish name, "Santa Biblia," and because he was told that it was God's Book. For fourteen years the Book remained in his home unread, but he and his sister were constantly on the lookout for someone who could explain it to them. One day, hearing that an evangelist colporter, the

VENTURA OTZOY AND WIFE IN FRONT OF THE CHAPEL HE BUILT

W. C. TOWNSEND AND CONGREGATION OF INDIANS AND LADINOS, RESULTING FROM BIBLE SOLD TO OTZOY

faithful Cixto Guajan, had passed through the town, the sister pursued and overtook him, and asked him to come to their house and read and explain the Book to them. This Cixto did, remaining as guest with Señor and Señorâ Otzoy for a week, during which time Don Ventura and his family, together with a married brother and family —ten persons in all—accepted Christ as their Saviour and destroyed their idols. Though fifty-five years of age and a confirmed drunkard, Don Ventura at once abandoned the use of intoxicating liquors.

So grateful was Don Ventura for what the Lord had done for himself and family, that he built, with the help of his son, and dedicated to the work of the Gospel the prettiest Chapel that I saw on my way through Guatemala. Here in this substantial building erected and dedicated to the Lord by a Cakchiquel Indian, converted as a result of Bible colportage work, my message was interpreted by Felix Chicol, the local pastor.

FROM DRUNKARD TO PREACHER

Felix Chicol was the son of a well-to-do Indian of Comalapa. His father had not only trained him in carpentry and the simple tailoring required in an Indian town, but insisted that he learn to read for the prestige it would give him. Young Felix was quite popular. He was induced to join one of the idolatrous secret organizations, and was made secre-

tary. This introduced him in an official capacity to all the religious festivals of the city,—debauches they might better be called,—and he became an incorrigible drunkard.

After drinking up all the property inherited from his father Felix borrowed money from the agent of a coast planter and obligated himself to work as a peon on the plantation until the debt was paid off. Ordinarily this would have been the last of Felix. With his habits, he had practically sold himself into life servitude. His appetite would call for more drink and keep him under a debt. Physically, socially, and spiritually he was a lost man. One day, however, he heard the Gospel, and was converted. He immediately changed his living habits. Not only did he give up drink, but, beginning at five o'clock in the morning, he put in long hours at work, in order the more quickly to pay off his debt. As soon as he was free, Felix returned to tell the story of Jesus to his old companions in sin and vice. He reached Comalapa at the time of the dedication service of the new Chapel just completed by Otzoy. His testimony and appeal to his old friends will long be remembered.

"You all know me," he said, "I am Felix Chicol. My father left me lands and an education. You made me secretary of your religious organization and I became a drunkard. I went in with you with money, good clothing, in my right mind, decent, and came out a hog. That is what your religion did

for me. Now I have come to Christ and His saving grace. He has changed me and I have come to tell you about it."

Felix developed fast, and soon began to devote all of his time to preaching and evangelizing. He is now pastor of the home Church in Comalapa which is steadily growing under his leadership.

TESTED BY PERSECUTION

Comalapa produced one of the first helpers in the work of translation of the Gospels into the Cakchiquel language, Margarito Otzoy. Don Margarito's father was well-to-do for an Indian and his uncle was one of the chiefs of the city. They were of the same clan as was Don Ventura, the converted carpenter. Margarito was an intelligent boy and because of his father's position in the community was able to get some schooling.

Margarito's first knowledge of the Gospel came through hearing Cixto Guajan's earnest preaching on a street corner from some of his memorized Bible texts. He followed to the house where the indoor service was afterwards held. The simple messeage gripped his young heart and he was truly converted.

The early converts in Comalapa suffered much persecution from their fellow-townsmen and Margarito's sincerity was immediately put to the test. His own father drove him from home and disowned him. The uncle who was a chief was one of the

principal persecutors, not only of his nephew, but of the mission church in general. He incited a mob to throw stones into the congregation and to fire shots through the door of the chapel in his efforts to break up the meetings. He made false accusations against several of the converts and had them imprisoned and kept at hard labor for six weeks, during which time they were dependent upon friends for all the food they received and to gather the evidence that enabled them to prove their innocence of the crime with which they were charged.

Margarito proved faithful through it all. The fires of persecution but brightened and helped to establish his faith. He had assisted Mr. Townsend with the translation of the Gospel of John and our business in Comalapa was to arrange if possible for the employment of all of his time in translation work until the New Testament should be completed.

Although our business in town was with Margarito, we could not leave without holding a service in the chapel built by Don Ventura. While I was speaking, two Indians, whose dress and bearing indicated their importance in the community, entered the chapel, saluted cordially the native pastor and Mr. Townsend, took their seats and listened attentively throughout the remainder of the service. With the little congregation that has passed through the fire we rejoiced at this evidence that blind prejudice is breaking down before patient, consistent,

Christian living of the small group of converts in Comalapa.

A MIXED CONGREGATION

Early in the day, after leaving Comalapa, we descended for some two or three thousand feet the side of a precipitous gorge, along the bottom of which flows a stream that furnishes motive power for a grist mill. Some little distance from the mill we found a congregation of fifty persons gathered at the home of a believer. This was the only mixed congregation of Indians and Ladinos that I saw in the Cakchiquel country. Here Spanish was more or less understood by all, and the services of an interpreter were not needed and Indian, Ladino and foreigner united in worshipping one common Father and in listening to the message from the Book He has given us.

This flourishing church had one of those humble origins which I have found to be such an interesting and encouraging feature of the work in Central America. An itinerant colporter evangelist sold a Bible to a man who was unable to read. The man loaned the book to his brother who lived in this cañon which is off the main thoroughfare. The brother read and studied the book and talked to his wife and children and neighbors about it, and the effect was such that when the next itinerant evangelist called at his house the whole family believed the Good News. They immediately turned their

home into a place of worship, and today a congregation of Indian and Ladino believers gathers there to hear the preaching of the Word.

A CONVERTED TEMPLE OWNER

The next and last stop on our journey to Panajachel after the service at the grist mill was the large, scattered, poverty-stricken Indian town of Patsum. In contrast with Comalapa, where the laborers enjoy a degree of independence and material prosperity, the Indians of this section are more poorly remunerated for their work than are most of the Indians of Guatemala. Three pesos (about five cents U. S. currency) a day is the average wage allowed on the plantations. One of the evidences of the deep poverty prevailing is the price they put on their daughters when sold in marriage,—five pesos! A promising pup will bring ten pesos and a cat six!

Besides being poverty-stricken, the population of Patsum is more than ordinarily ignorant and superstitious. The Ladino landowners of the vicinity are greatly opposed to the work of the Mission among the Indians, whom they wish to keep in subjection and poverty in the interests, as they think, of cheap labor. They tell the Indians that the Missionaries will kill their children, eat the bodies, and throw their souls into the volcano where the devil stands with his fork ready to catch them.

The town had always been inhospitable to the

Gospel until the door was opened by the tact and persistence of a colporter evangelist of the American Bible Society. Caught in a storm in passing the town he took refuge on the porch of a temple, or shrine for images, and was invited by the keeper and owner to enter. Improving the opportunity offered by his forced stay until the storm should pass, the colporter cultivated the acquaintance of his host and tactfully presented the cause of his Master, with the result that a friendship was established, and he was invited to call again.

Not long after on one of his visits the colporter noticed, to his surprise and joy, that the idolatrous images and pictures had disappeared. Don Ajpop, the owner, told him that he no longer had any faith in the power of idols and that he wanted to dedicate the shrine to the service of Christ. The building was converted as well as its owner and soon became the place of worship for a rapidly growing congregation, now numbering eighty.

Don Ajpop's wife was also converted, and they both gave faithful testimony to the saving power of Christ. After a period of devoted service, during which he was like a father to the little band of Christians meeting in the former idol temple, he met with an accident not unusual in Guatemala. The Ladinos, mixed descendants of the Spanish conquerors, have forcibly taken from the Indians all the best land, driving them farther and farther up the mountain sides in search of patches suitable

for the cultivation of the corn, beans and potatoes upon which they subsist. Some of these places are very difficult of access and dangerous to cultivate. As Don Ajpop was working in his field on the mountain side, he fell one hundred feet over a precipice and died after lingering a few days.

From the time of his conversion Don Ajpop's life had been one of habitual thanksgiving for everything God had given him. He was now thankful that he had been found where he was—lying alone —after he fell, so that he could be brought home to die. While he lived he continued, not only to give thanks to God, but to express his constant thankfulness and appreciation for all the little services rendered by friends during his illness. Thus, the first convert of Patsum, the owner of the chapel, passed triumphantly away. The widow, a sweet Christian character, a veritable mother in Israel, continues to live in the same home with an adopted daughter and still contributes the use of the former idol temple to the cause of the Master. We could not enter the door of this converted shrine without feeling that the place whereon we stood was holy ground.

The interior of the chapel was attractively decorated with Bible-pictures and Scripture-texts. There was even a window, a rare thing in an Indian house. There were regular benches with backs, and a table that served as a pulpit. A kerosene lamp took the place of the usual wax or tallow candle seen in other places. The floor was covered with

fresh, sweet-smelling pine needles that lent an air of cheer to the mud-walled room. When the service was over we gathered the pine needles into a pile on the floor and, with our blankets and ponchos, made a bed upon which we slept better and more soundly than we had done before during the trip.

DARKNESS AND DAWN

In the morning, before leaving Patsum, we listened to the following story illustrating the superstitions that are giving away to Gospel light in this section of Guatemala.

A young girl of the town became ill and the witch doctor was called in to diagnose the cause of the disease. He immediately put everyone out of the house in order that he might be alone with the girl. After a while he called the parents and showed them a snake two feet long that he claimed to have taken out of the child's stomach.

"She will now recover," he said, "but she has had a new birth and must be re-baptized and re-named."

The Roman priest was called to re-baptize the child, and the saloon keeper furnished on credit the keg of rum, the necessary accompaniment of any Indian ceremony in Guatemala, whether baptism, wedding, or burial. There was general rejoicing. Money was borrowed with which to pay the witch doctor, the priest, and the saloon keeper. The girl, however, died and the people have lost confidence in the priest and in the witch doctor. They are begin-

ning to listen to the preaching of the Gospel, have become interested, and it looks as though they would soon throw in their lot with the little company who are following the Light of the World. Thus the walls of superstition are crumbling, fetters are being broken, and our loving Father through the message found in His Word is becoming a reality to the Indians of Guatemala.

V

PAUL BURGESS AND THE QUICHÉS

IN Quezaltenango lives the pioneer missionary to the Quichés, Rev. Paul Burgess, Ph.D., of the Foreign Mission Board of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. The Quichés are the most numerous of all the Indian tribes of Guatemala, numbering some 300,000. Like the Cakchiquels, they are of Mayan stock, the descendants of a former proud and warlike race.

We reached Quezaltenango from Panajachel by one of the many new automobile roads that Guatemala has recently taken to building, or rather cutting, through the soft volcanic ash of its mountain sides and over its broken tablelands. As yet these roads are not of much service to the transportation of the country except in facilitating a certain class of passenger traffic. They are but little relief to the burden-bearing Indian who takes short cuts anyway and needs only a trail to follow. Sometimes when our auto horn sounded and the frightened human pack trains would scatter, some climbing up the mountain side out of the road and others stepping off to the very edge of the precipice, we wondered if by making life and travel easier for his

oppressors these roads had not increased rather than decreased the burden of the Indian.

The ride from the Cakchiquel country to that of the Quichés is a delightful one. It is hard to imagine more beautiful scenery than that presented by the ever-changing aspects of volcano-surrounded Lake Atitlán, a lovely gem in a magnificent setting. The grade to the top of the pass through the mountains surrounding the Lake is very steep and the curves so short that our machine, a powerful American car, could not make them without stopping and reversing. Over and over again, when the chauffeur would cramp the wheels and back the car far enough to enable him to round the curve, the fate of the machine as well as the lives of the passengers depended on the security of the brakes and the skill of the driver in making the shift. Had a mistake been made, there was neither curb, parapet nor boulder to prevent our being dashed to the bottom of the gorge below.

On arriving at the top of the pass, with what feelings of surprise and pleasure did we find our road leading through a pine forest where the ground was carpeted with sweet-smelling pine needles. But what anomaly it seemed to see toiling Indians staggering along under heavy burdens, or resting beside their loads amid such surroundings. In all previous mental association of pine forests and Indians the latter had been proud and free, carrying bow and tomahawk, or rifle. What a

contrast to this conception is the broken-spirited, hopeless creature that today watches with such stolid indifference as our car passes.

When we reached Quezaltenango, I found that failing health had sent Dr. Burgess to the homeland for a complete change, and that Mrs. Burgess was holding on alone, completing in consultation with the Rev. Amos Bradley of the Primitive Methodist Mission, the final copy of the manuscript of the Gospel of John in Quiché. Mrs. Burgess very kindly took me around to the most accessible mission centers and did all she could to help me see the work and gather items of interest regarding it.

In addition to the ever-increasing tasks connected with a growing missionary work, Dr. and Mrs. Burgess are engaged in the translation of the New Testament into the Indian language of the district. The work among the Spanish-speaking mixed race has unavoidably required the greater part of Dr. Burgess' time during the eleven years he has been in the country. The Mission was already established among them before he arrived and the Ladino Church must not be neglected. But his heart has constantly gone out to the greater altogether uncared for Indian population of Western Guatemala.

Dr. Burgess has devoted himself assiduously to the study of the Quiché language. He has taken long journeys of many days' duration, itinerating the mountain trails on foot, carrying his supplies in a knapsack, eating native food, sleeping in native

huts; and becoming familiar with the country and customs, the failings and virtues, superstitions and beliefs, hopes and fears of the Indian; coming to know his very soul as he tramped chilly plateau and tropic valley with him, or shared his hospitality under the thatched roof of his one-roomed home.

The response of the Indian to this sympathetic interest has been far more encouraging than the response to the attempts made to reach the prouder Spanish-speaking native. When Dr. Burgess arrived in Quezaltenango eleven years ago, there were but two Indian converts in the mission church. Today there are more than one hundred and fifty in the city itself, besides other hundreds in nearby villages.

The way these Indian Christians have assumed responsibility for the evangelization of their fellows is in the highest degree encouraging. A league of bare-footed Indians, a sort of men's club, has been a spontaneous movement organized among them without any suggestion on the part of the missionary. Every member of the League promises not to let a day pass without speaking to some one about Christ. These earnest workers have printed at their own expense small tracts and short messages to their fellow Indians. Some of the members of the League go to nearby villages every Sunday to preach, and most of them devote some time each month to house-to-house visitation and street work among their own people. The activities of this

men's club have greatly increased church attendance and helped to create the present friendly attitude toward the Mission of the Indian population of Quezaltenango and the surrounding country. Similar volunteer lay service is an outstanding feature of Protestant missionary work in the various countries of Central America. The great need of Guatemala, today, is trained workers for organization and leadership, and schools for better equipment of efficient native pastors and evangelists.

Encouraged by the results already accomplished, the enthusiasm of Dr. and Mrs. Burgess for their work is unbounded. During the long absences of her husband Mrs. Burgess assumes the direction of the work so cheerfully and efficiently that one wonders how she finds time and from where she derives the energy to carry on the work of the Mission and at the same time maintain the orderly home in which their four daughters are growing into lovely Christian womanhood.

VI

SOME FIRST FRUITS OF THE QUICHÉS

ONE of the Quiché Indian converts who is making notable progress and becoming a factor in the work is Vicente Cotom. When a boy he had once heard a missionary explain in Spanish the meaning of the Cross. He had read a little in a Spanish Bible that had been given him by a friend, and had come to look upon it as the Word of God; but he had never attended a Protestant service, nor heard a sermon. At the time of the visit of Rev. Juan Vareto, the Baptist evangelist from the Argentine Republic, a friend invited Vicente to hear the visiting preacher and made an appointment to go with him to the evening service. The friend did not turn up at the appointed time. The young Indian's interest had, however, been aroused and he went alone to hear the Argentine orator and decided to become a Christian.

A YOUNG TRANSLATOR

Vicente was a member of one of the most exclusive pagan brotherhoods, or clans, of Quezaltenango. Three months after his conversion he

appeared before the assembly of the organization, composed of young men of his own age, and declared that he had accepted the Gospel and could no longer be one of them. At first they doubted his statement and thought he was joking. When, however, it dawned upon the leader that Vicente was in earnest, he flew into a terrible rage.

"Do you really mean what you say?" he shouted, pointing menacingly at him.

"I have nothing further to say," replied the young Christian.

The explosion of a bomb could hardly have caused greater confusion. The excited and exasperated Indians declared that such a dangerous man must not be allowed to leave the building alive to carry with him the secrets of the organization. He must be killed at once. Some tried to frighten and to browbeat him. Others tried to persuade him to renounce his faith in order to save his life. These latter managed to get around him in a body and press him out of the building. The president of the assembly, for some unknown reason, prevented the rest of the Indians from leaving the room. Vicente was roughly handled but managed to escape without serious injury.

For the next three months many of his former friends would not speak to him on the street nor recognize him in any way. He continued, however, to maintain a kindly attitude toward them all; and, becoming convinced that he does not intend to

harm them by divulging any compromising secrets, and have begun to recognize and speak to him as before. This changed attitude of his old associates caused him great joy and he is exerting all his influence to persuade them to accept Christ.

Vicente's spiritual development has been rapid. Although he does not know Spanish very well, he has been chosen as one of the helpers in the translation of the New Testament because of his spiritual insight and because he does all his thinking in the Quiché language.

INDIAN CHIEF WON BY FORMER WITCH DOCTOR

The motor road leading from Quezaltenango on the cool tableland of Western Guatemala to the railroad station at San Felipe in the hot coast country, passes through the village of Santa María, situated on the side of the volcano from which its name is derived. The location is at an altitude that gives a perfect climate in Central America. Within the sound of a rushing stream, in the midst of a luxuriant vegetation that is watered by abundant rains, and bathed, even in the dry season, in heavy dews, the environs of Santa María are a favorite haunt for the bewilderingly diversified and beautiful bird life of Guatemala. A great variety of parrots and brilliantly-colored hummingbirds, the modestly attired, sweet-singing *guarda barranco* (sentinel of the gorge), the voluble mocking-bird, are all here. Here too the bold oriole, whose in-

accessible nest, swinging from the branches of the tallest trees, he makes no attempt to conceal, darts from limb to limb and whistles defiance to all bird enemies.

Within full view of the village, the volcano itself is busily engaged in the task of building up a new mountain. Some years ago, after one of the many earthquakes, an immense opening many feet in diameter and of unfathomable depth was discovered at the base of the old volcano. Visitors would roll huge boulders into the opening and listen to the reverberations of the rebounding stones against the sides of the cavern until the sound became faint and died away in the distance.

One night there was a terrific explosion of the imprisoned subterranean forces, through this immense valve of escape, which sent millions of tons of volcanic dust and ashes miles into the heavens. The eruptions continued until the ashes reported to have fallen on the surrounding countries, on the decks of distant vessels, and on some of the islands of the Pacific, reached such a depth that Rev. E. M. Haymaker, after careful calculations, estimated that the amount discharged was sufficient to fill a cube of the dimensions of thirty miles.

Fortunately for Guatemala, the prevailing wind was such that the greater portion of the ejected material was carried out to be distributed over the broad Pacific, otherwise the Republic would have been left a desert. As it is, much of the cultivable

land is buried too deeply to be reached for agricultural purposes, and in places on the highlands planters dig through three feet of volcanic ash before they reach soil in which to plant their coffee trees. Since this eruption the new crater opened at the base of the mountain has been steadily building itself up by the stream of material constantly being ejected until the new mountain bids fair to outstrip the old in height and relative importance.

The religion of the people of the village of Santa María consists, chiefly, in keeping the volcano pacified so that it may not get angry and destroy them. The witch doctors are the officiating priests. "Priests of the Sun" they are still called in their native tongue. Their activities consist in muttering exorcisms and incantations and prescribing incense and candle burning. These men are feared and revered, more even than are the priests of Rome.

One of the witch doctors of Santa María came to believe in the "Good News of the Kingdom," became conscience stricken, gave up his vices, confessed the imposture he had been practicing, and destroyed the paraphanalia of his cult. Persecution immediately followed, both from his former co-religionists and from the Ladino landowners and merchants, most of whom are interested in keeping the Indians in ignorance and subjection. For daring to confess his faith he was arbitrarily arrested and sent to work with a road-building gang.

In spite of all the persecution and unjust treat-

ment he had received the former witch doctor was so happy in his newly-found Saviour that he could not keep quiet. He began to talk about Him to Marcelinó Velasquez, another Indian, one of the chiefs, his immediate overseer in the road work. He pressed the subject very hard at every opportunity, until finally Velasquez decided that the new religion could not be so bad as it had been painted to him by others, and began to harbor a secret desire to know more about it. As soon as Velasquez showed an interest by asking questions, the poor laborer felt his weakness and ignorance and persuaded his overseer to let him bring the missionary, Rev. Paul Burgess, to see him at his home. A day was appointed for the visit, and Velasquez, who lived on his little farm not far from the village of San Felipe, met the missionary on the road and conducted him by a back lane to his humble home.

From the first Velasquez seemed convinced of the truth of the Gospel message, but saw the light in a confused way. Dr. Burgess continued to call on him when his missionary journeys took him near San Felipe. Finally, on one of these visits during the reading and explanation of the healing of the paralytic let down through the roof, the Indian exclaimed, "I see! It is all clear now." There followed a period of remarkable spiritual and intellectual progress on the part of Velasquez. He bought some reading glasses beacuse of defective vision and began to learn his letters. Dr. Burgess

continued to visit his home when traveling in that vicinity. He could not help noticing, however, that he was never taken to the house by entrance from the main road, but by a roundabout lane hedged with tropical vegetation.

One day an Indian called at the Mission home in Quezaltenango and asked for Dr. Burgess.

"I've done it! I've done it! I've done it!" he exclaimed when he saw the missionary, without waiting for the usual formal salutation.

"Done what?" asked Dr. Burgess, somewhat puzzled by this unusual demonstration on the part of the usually stoical Indian.

"Told them I was a believer! Told them I was a believer!" he replied.

Then followed the explanation. The Indian, who proved to be Velasquez, was a member of the Council of chiefs that looks after the affairs of an Indian community. The day before, some members of the Council had started to vilify the "Evangelistas," as the Protestants are called in Latin America. They kept it up until Velasquez could bear it no longer.

"Those things are not true. I am one of them and I know," he had declared.

The confession had brought him such joy and such a sense of liberty and freedom that he could not wait for the next visit of the missionary; but had set out at once on the long journey to Quezaltenango in order to participate the good news of his

newly-found joy. Since this confession there has been no more taking the missionary to his home by the side lane. Quite the contrary; he is now always ready to publish his faith.

Velasquez was in debt when converted, and worked hard to pay off his obligations. As soon as they were settled he began to give largely to help with the spread of the Gospel among his own people. Keeping nothing for himself but the bare necessities of life, he gives all profits from his land and labor to help evangelize the district in which he lives. He has given more than thirty thousand pesos, about five hundred dollars, a large sum for an Indian, to build, near his home in the village of Palmar, one of the prettiest chapels in the Republic. Velasquez gives of his time also. He preaches regularly to two congregations that have been established as a result of his labors. He is now pleading with the Mission to send a Spanish-speaking worker to preach to the land-owning class.

I do not know what has become of the converted witch doctor of Santa María through whose earnest testimony Velasquez became interested in the Gospel. I do know, however, that the Gospel leaven did its work, and that humble instruments are still being used in the establishment of the Kingdom in Guatemala.

VII

THE BADGE OF SERFDOM

ON our trips over the mountain roads and trails of Guatemala, from long before daylight until after dark, we met and passed, continually, toiling Indians carrying on their backs loads of all kinds of products and manufactures of the country from onions and eggs to pottery and blankets, as well as a multitude of objects of commerce for the interior; pins, needles and textiles, Portland cement, lumber and corrugated iron. These burdens were so packed as to average in weight a hundred and twenty-five pounds each and were held in place and partially supported by a broad leather strap over the forehead. I came to look upon this strap as the distinctive symbol of Guatemalan serfdom.

In Guatemala the Indian is oppressed and degraded to such a degree that his human dignity is no longer recognized and his service costs less than does that of the pack-animal with which he competes. To bring merchandise and building materials on muleback the nearly one hundred miles from Guatemala City to the Mission home in Panajachel costs eighty-four cents a hundred pounds.

A GUATEMALAN FREIGHT TRAIN

THE BADGE OF SERFDOM

The Indian carries it for sixty cents! It is three days' journey to the city and three days' back with the load. The Indian, therefore, earns ten cents a day and feeds himself.

"How can he do it?" you ask.

Of course he cannot live from the proceeds of this enforced service. He, with the help of his wife and children, cultivates a little patch of corn, and he carries from home the unleavened cakes that form his sustenance during the trip. A mule must be fed and cared for, and some one must be hired to go along and look after it. The mule also represents a considerable investment and its sickness or death means financial loss to the owner. The Indian requires no care. He feeds himself and sleeps beside his load where night overtakes him. If taken sick he can consult the witch doctor and have the spirits of his aggrieved ancestors exorcised. If the Indian dies there is no money loss, his own people bury him and his children or relatives take his place at the task. Hence, it is that in the labor market of Guatemala the animal is worth more than the man.

Day after day we met these human caravans on the mountain trails, accompanied, frequently, by little boys and girls plodding under staggering loads. Sometimes there would be whole families, each individual carrying his or her load of produce or merchandise together with the palm-leaf waterproof cover to protect it in case of rain. Distributed among them were also the extra covers for the

night, the baby, the food, and the rude clay utensils for cooking it; while on top of all were the dry sticks that had been picked up along the trail to make sure of being able to build a fire to make corn cakes and black coffee at nightfall.

We came to look upon the headstrap, not merely as a sign of Guatemala's degradation, but as a most powerful instrument in retaining the Indian in his present servile condition. A jingle from boyhood days, when the attempt was being made to bring into ridicule the bangs that were much in fashion among the girls, kept coming to my mind.

"If God made the forehead a temple of thought
The devil made bangs to bring it to naught."

In this case, however, I would substitute the word "headstrap" for "bangs."

What more diabolical contrivance could have been devised to keep the brain of the user from exercising its normal function? Imagine adjusting the forehead into a broad thick cowhide strap, and by it maintaining in position on one's back a dead weight of one hundred and twenty-five pounds, mile after mile, up precipitous mountain sides and down deep gorges, over chilly plateaus and through steaming tropic valleys, from daylight till dark; until the perspiration permeates, softens and darkens the hard leather and the brow moulds the thick hide to its own shape, and wears it so smooth that it looks like the well-worn breeching of an old work-

harness. Could one, at the same time, use the brain within for the purpose of solving the problems of life?

I was not at all surprised when Mr. Cameron Townsend, who knows the Indian as do few others, volunteered the information that he makes practically no progress so long as he continues to be classed by himself and others as a beast of burden. In corroboration of the statement he told the story of a Christian Indian and converted drunkard.

Francisco Diaz, because he wanted to be employed in the service of the spread of the Gospel, was engaged to accompany Mr. Townsend on his journeys and to carry the books for him. For months they traveled, worked and ate together. Mr. Townsend carried a well-filled knapsack himself, but Francisco carried the main load of books supported by the cowhide strap over the forehead. Francisco shewed a splendid, consistent Christian spirit, but was a very dull pupil. He seemed to have no memory capable of retaining the things Mr. Townsend tried to teach him.

Later, the Indian accompanied him on a trip into the neighboring republic of Honduras. Here the people were not accustomed to see men serving as pack animals and they did not approve of it. One of the members of the native church gave Mr. Townsend a mule to carry the books; so that instead of carying the burden himself the Indian had the care of the animal. The change in Francisco

was marvelous and rapid. He immediately felt his dignity as a man, developed a good memory, learned to read and study, and soon became an effective preacher to his own people as well as a congenial companion. The beginning of his mental progress dated from the day he abandoned the degrading headstrap. The story of Francisco Diaz but confirmed what I had felt in my very soul must be the case, from the time when I first saw this abominable burden-bearing serfdom.

In Guatemala the child of five or six years of age becomes an asset. At this age the baby brother or sister can be strapped onto its little back and thus early it learns endurance and responsibility. It is not only family responsibilities that are made to rest heavily upon the child. Whether boy or girl, it dresses as do its parents—is a replica of them in miniature—; and in the transportation of the country, it bends its back to the load, fits its little forehead into the strap and bows uncomplainingly under the burden of the demands of the ruling class.

Cheerless, comfortless, hopeless drudgery is the present lot of the Guatemalan Indian, relieved only by the celebration of a feast-day when he drinks himself into oblivion on government rum sold to him by unscrupulous agents of powerful landlords. These are ever on the alert for the favorable moment when the poor Indian shall be sufficiently under the influence of the poisonous liquid to be encouraged to increase his debt to a point where its repayment

shall mean life-servitude to the lender. Death alone comes to his final rescue.

Little wonder that the Guatemalan Indian has no song. In his soul there is no music, even of the most melancholy nature to give urge to expression in song. The only Indians that I heard making any attempt to sing were the Mission converts. Depressed as I had been by the sight of the toiling burden-bearers met on the road, the memory of the hearty singing in the services that followed every hard day's mountain travel, and of hopeful and even joyful Indian faces listening to the message softened the boards and the mud floors on which we slept during our stay among them. It was also a relief to know that consecrated workers are busy translating the "Good News" of One who came to break fetters, loosen bonds, set the captive free, and bring music to the soul of even the disconsolate Indian who is today bowing beneath the cowhide headstrap, Guatemala's badge of serfdom.

VIII

AMONG THE MIXED RACE

A FOREIGN coffee planter, whose life was far from exemplary from an evangelical point of view, but who had the well-being of his employees at heart, took a few Bibles to distribute among such of them as could read. The plantation was distant and some years went by before these Bibles were heard from.

THE PLANTER'S DILEMMA

One day the planter came to Mr. Haymaker, in Guatemala City.

"Look here, you have got me into a peck of trouble, he said. "I am no theologian and those books need explanation. My people keep coming to me with questions about the Bible. I can't answer them. You must come down and help me out."

In answer to this appeal, Mr. Haymaker went to see the planter, and they sent for the man who had been asking the most questions. Don Juan, as he was called, came bringing his Bible with him. After they had talked a little while, Don Juan became quite excited, ran to the door and called to another employee.

"Come here, come quickly," he cried. "Here is a man who believes exactly as I do."

More came in, and after they had talked until suppertime, the proprietor told Don Juan to call to his house after supper all the people who were interested in the Bible, for Mr. Haymaker was there to answer their questions.

Between sixty and seventy persons came. Some of the people present had been meeting with Don Juan for the study of the Bible for two years. They listened so intently that eyes and mouth as well as ears seemed to be drinking in all that was said.

At the close of two hours, the meeting was dismissed, but the people had no intention of going away so soon. It was past midnight when, having secured the promise of the over-worked missionary to visit them every two weeks, they finally dispersed. So absorbed were two of the men in their conversation about the Gospel that after leaving the house, they stood in the road in the pouring rain discussing the Good News until their attention was called to the fact that they might as well step under shelter. Now in Santa Rita, Guatemala, a congregation gathers regularly to hear the preaching of the Word where, until the visit of Mr. Haymaker, the Bible was the first and only missionary.

THE DRINK-CURE

Moonshiner, professional gambler, trickster and

cock-fighter was Don Flavio Argueta. He, a brother, José Marí, and a sister, worked the game together. Following up the fairs and festivals throughout the country, they directed cock fights and conducted successful gambling campaigns with trick cards, loaded roulette wheels, and like deceptive devices. Once, when the officers of the law were searching the evidence of their illicit liquor-selling, they hid the containers under the skirts of the image of the Christ which they had in the house!

Drink, however, had succeeded in mastering the two brothers. After every successful enterprise they would go on a terrible spree, drinking until their money was gone and they were nearly dead from the effects of the poison. These sprees would be followed by fits of melancholy and deep despondency. Once, during a religious fair, at the Indian village of Cantel, where they had conducted one of their campaigns with the customary success in exploiting the weaknesses of the degraded Indians, they drank themselves as usual to the verge of delirium tremens. In the fit of despondency that followed, they decided to commit suicide, and were preparing their revolvers for the purpose when an acquaintance called, and they confided in him their intention.

The friend counseled them not to give up but to try to find a cure. There was a medicine for everything, and they could surely find the remedy for drunkenness if they would but try hard enough.

"It is no use," they said, "We are tired of trying: there is no remedy."

"Yes," said their visitor, "but the Protestants don't drink; they must have the right kind of medicine."

So insistent was the friend that the Protestants must have a cure for the drink-habit that the brothers promised to go and see them. They were too weak and unstrung to make the journey that day, but the next, they both braced up and went to Quezaltenango, the nearest mission station. The first night José María was too sick to attend the service, but Don Flavio went. The preacher explained the parable of the lost sheep. The message went home, and after the service, Don Flavio approached the missionary and said, "I am that lost sheep and I want to come into the fold."

He found the Saviour that night. The following day he brought his brother and sister to the Mission. Later all were converted and were ultimately received into the Church in Guatemala City by the Rev. E. M. Haymaker.

Immediately after their conversion the two brothers began to work at their trade as whip-makers. Don Flavio attended all the mission services and began to take part by testifying. The missionary in charge suggested that he learn to preach and gave him private instruction. Finally both brothers became successful preachers. Don

José María is a talented Bible student and noted for his ready use of memorized texts.

Don Flavio asked to be allowed to return to the section of country where he was best known and where all were familiar with the manner of life he had led before his conversion, so that he might bear testimony to his former companions. For nineteen years he has worked in South Western Guatemala and has organized thirty-two congregations. From moonshiner, gambler and drunkard, he has become one of the most successful preachers of the Gospel in Guatemala. Surely, "this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes."

EVANGELIZING BY MAIL

El Salvador is the smallest and the most thickly populated of the Central American countries. The cause of popular education is much more advanced here than in Guatemala. Although the mass of the population is of Indian origin, this country does not have a distinctly Indian problem, since the aborigines of Salvador have nearly all adopted the Spanish language and customs. The laborer is more free and the general intelligence of the working class is on a noticeably higher plane than in Guatemala.

Pedro Villalta, a native tanner living near the port of La Unión, purchased his first Bible from a colporter of the Bible Society in 1889. He came to look upon the Bible as a book which one ought

always to keep in the house. He used to read it during Holy Week and occasionally at other times during the year, more as a religious superstition than for the good he would receive from it. After his second Bible had been eaten by termites (white ants) he called on Mr. Chapman of the American Baptist Mission in San Miguel, and bought his third Bible in 1921.

Mr. Chapman took the name and address of Sr. Villalta, as he always does of persons who express enough interest in the Gospel to purchase a Bible. He then began sending him "El Heraldo," the little monthly mission paper. The paper has a department of Bible study accompanied by questions, and the names of those who answer the questions correctly are published each month.

Before long, Don Pedro began sending a few answers to the monthly Bible questions. Then he wrote asking the meanings of the abbreviations for the books of the Bible. Mr. Chapman wrote him quite fully, giving directions as to the use of references. The man now answers all the questions every month.

Not only has Sr. Villalta kept up a correspondence with Mr. Chapman regarding difficulties as they have presented themselves, but he has bought a number of the evangelical books advertised in the mission paper. He found especially helpful a little book by D. L. Moody, entitled "The Way to God," a Spanish translation of which was sent him. He

has taken a great interest in the distribution of Gospels, Bibles, and other Christian literature, and always keeps a stock of these books on hand for sale at his leather store in La Unión. Colporters were given his address and when they visited La Unión they would go to the tanner's house and preach to the people he would gather together. Later Mr. Chapman himself visited La Unión and found Sr. Villalta greatly interested in the progress of the Gospel among his neighbors. Mr. Chapman speaks of him, half-jokingly, as the "Mail Order Convert."

I considered it a providential arrangement that my own trip to La Unión to wait for my boat should coincide with the pastoral visit of Mr. Chapman, since I was to witness the first Protestant wedding and baptism resulting from this missionary mail order business.

On the night of our arrival at La Unión, Don Pedro and two of his sons, as well as the man who was to be married, met us at the railroad station and accompanied us to a hotel. The following morning they came for us and conducted us along the beach to where the primitive tannery and the home of Sr. Villalta are located, some distance from the town. Here we found his family and a group of twenty friends and employees gathered to witness the marriage and baptism. After some discussion, it was decided to postpone the baptism until later in the day when the tide would be full, that

the ceremony might be performed in the sea. A song service was started immediately, and after some time spent in singing under the leadership of Mr. Chapman, he and I each made a short address. Then the couple publicly plighted their troth, and the whole company proceeded to the sea and watched from the beach while the newly married couple were buried in baptism.

After another short service at the house the wedding dinner, of soup, stew, roast chicken, rice, bread, and tortillas, was served. Bottles of ginger ale were opened for the visitors. At the close of the meal, water was passed from guest to guest in a large bowl-like gourd. Mr. Chapman and I had been given glasses from which to drink our ginger ale, and therefore did not have occasion to use the common gourd.

As we were leaving the house, an old woman came in. She had expected to be baptized also, but had arrived too late.

"Never mind," said the happy-looking mother of Sr. Villalta's seven nicely behaved children, "you can be baptized when we are."

"So Sr. and Señora Villalta, the leaders of this interesting group, are not baptized yet?" I questioned. "What is the reason?"

"Irregular marital relations," was the reply.

Many years ago, when a young man, Villalta married a woman who ran away and left him with two children. The present woman came to live with

him later and has not only been a mother to the children of the first woman but has borne him five others. Since their conversion they have decided to be legally married as soon as he can comply with the requirements of the law and secure a divorce from the first woman. Then they will be baptized and become members of the organized body of believers that Mr. Chapman hopes soon to see established. Literary evangelism by the distribution of Bible, book, tract, periodical and letter, tactfully and prayerfully conducted with a view to winning souls for the Master won the Villaltas for Christ, and such distribution is being singularly blessed throughout Central America.

IX

GUATEMALA SENDS ITS FIRST MISSIONARY TO THE INDIANS OF BOLIVIA

AS widely separated as are Guatemala and Bolivia, the complete story of the church activities of the one can never again be written without reference to the other.

Juan Ayllón, a young student of Indian blood, attended the Methodist Mission School in La Paz, Bolivia, and was converted as a result of the interest of the missionary teachers in his spiritual welfare. Soon after his conversion, there was born in his heart a longing to be able to do something for his own people. The longing was nourished, and developed into an intense desire. He began to dream of a time when he might be able to devote his whole life to their welfare, but how to secure the proper training remained an unsettled question.

About four years ago he saw in a little mission paper a notice of the opening by the Society of Friends of a Bible school for the training of Christian workers at Chiquimula, in far-away Guatemala. Was it possible for him to enter such a school, he thought he might be able to fit himself

for the work to which he hoped to devote his life. He wrote for particulars and was told that a hearty welcome would await him were he able to go.

The great distance from the interior of Bolivia to the interior of Guatemala, 2,500 miles, and the fact that he did not have sufficient money to pay his fare did not discourage Juan. He managed to earn and save enough to take him to Callao, Peru, where he found employment with a carpenter until a friend secured an opportunity for him to work his way as stoker on board a freight ship bound for New York, with the understanding that he would be allowed to disembark when they reached Panama, from which point he hoped to get passage for Guatemala. This would be a long stride towards his destination and he went on board the ship in high spirits, undertaking gladly the heavy work of coal shoveling for the few intervening days, since every shovelful would furnish energy to take him so much nearer to his destination.

We may well imagine Ayllón's disappointment when on leaving the harbor at Callao the ship turned south instead of north and spent some time visiting ports on the coast before starting for Panama.

Reaching Panama finally, a month later than he had anticipated, he put away his grimy clothing, washed, dressed in his best, packed his grip, and prepared to leave the ship. He came on deck, however, only to find the vessel steamed through the Canal and through the bay on the Atlantic side,

bound for New York, without giving him any opportunity to land. Disappointed again, there was nothing left to do but to return to his work in the stoke-hole, where for so long with blistered hands and wearied body he had toiled at the heavy, unaccustomed task, surrounded by associates whose manner, language, and customs contrasted vividly with those of the beloved missionary teachers of La Paz.

One cold Sunday morning in February, he reached New York, where, in spite of his forebodings of possible difficulty in landing, he received an honorable discharge, and left the ship with the best wishes of the captain and crew, among whom his humble, helpful, Christian Spirit had made him quite popular. He found himself, however, an alien in a strange city, surrounded by a people, the rudiments of whose language he had but recently acquired. On leaving the wharf, Ayllón was searched by the police. Finding a Spanish Bible in his possession, one of the officials directed him to a Quaker Sunday School. Then his fortunes took a sudden turn. Verifying by wire his story told in broken English, friends he made there received him into their homes. Money was supplied and in a few days he was traveling by Pullman to New Orleans where he took steamer for Porto Barrios, Guatemala, and arrived at the school in Chiquimula some weeks late, having been one hundred and four days on the way.

Graduating after three years of training, Juan Ayllón had inspired his associates with such confidence in his Christian character and steadfastness of purpose that the mission church of Guatemala decided to send him as their own missionary back to Bolivia, together with the young woman of their number who had become his wife; and the little church organized a mission board to put their purpose into effect.

Juan and Tomasa Ayllón left for La Paz, the capital of Bolivia, during the writer's visit to Guatemala, and are now living and working in that greatest Indian city of the two Americas. They have not decided on a location for the new mission center, but with the consent of the church in Guatemala, Sr. Ayllón has been helping with the work of the American Bible Society among the Indians of Bolivia while exploring the field and deciding upon a location among the Aymara Indians, into whose language he hopes some day to be able to help translate the Scriptures.

Telling his story now, Juan recognizes the hand of God in every step of the way, even in the lengthened voyage and the rude discipline of the stokehole that had seemed such calamities at the time. Not only does the record of the past few years lead us to believe that if Don Juan and Doña Tomasa are spared we shall hear from them in the future annals of the missionary conquest of Bolivia, but the fact that they are supported there by the prayers

and contributions of those of Indian blood of the Mission Church in Guatemala, is conclusive evidence of the missionary spirit of these native disciples who are giving of their poverty that others may share the "Good News."

X

E. S. ALPHONSE AND THE FOREST INDIANS OF PANAMA

IN November, 1924, an Indian tribe, inhabiting the tropical forest about one hundred miles from the great Panama Canal, received, with much rejoicing on the part of the little Christian community among them, the first book ever published in their language. This book was the Gospel of Matthew. It was paid for largely by the members of the Union Church of the Canal Zone, and was taken to them by Rev. R. R. Gregory of the American Bible Society.

These Indians are of Guaimi stock and are locally known as "Valientes" the Spanish word for "brave." They occupy the jungles of the Valiente Peninsula which extends out into the Caribbean Sea on the North of the Isthmus of Panama, between Mosquito Bay and the Chiriqui Lagoon, about one hundred miles, as the crow flies, from the Bible House in Cristobal. They are exceedingly primitive in life and customs, and have but three domestic animals, the pig, the dog, and woman. The pig is kept for the money his carcass will bring in Bocas del Toro, the nearest town; the dog, for protection

and for trailing wild animals through the dense undergrowth of the forest; while the woman is the only burden-bearer.

Mr. E. S. Alphonse, a young Panaman Negro, nine months after his own conversion, decided that he wanted to devote his life to winning this people for Christ, and was recommended to the Mission Board of the Wesleyan Methodist Church by his pastor, the Rev. M. C. Surgeon. Mr. Alphonse was later joined by his wife and sister-in-law. As a result of sacrificial devotion a Christian community has since come into being, and seven years of unremitting labor have reduced the language to writing and produced a manuscript copy of a grammar, together with a vocabulary of some two thousand words, besides the above-mentioned Gospel. In March, 1924, it was my privilege to visit these devoted workers in their chosen field among these hitherto sadly neglected Indians.

A United Fruit Company's steamer carried us from Cristobal to Bocas-del-Toro. From here we were taken by the Rev. C. S. Cousins in a small launch the thirty-five miles between Bocas and Cusapin, the Mission Station. The trip was through the beautiful archipelago that encloses the Chiriqui Lagoon to the extreme point of the Valiente Peninsula which is occupied by this division of the Valiente tribe. The first twenty miles was over shallow water between low-lying keys. The higher part of some of these is under cultivation, but the lower

sections are covered by a dense mangrove growth. The water between the keys is so shallow that it requires careful piloting to keep from running aground. The surface where we passed the reef to enter the last fifteen mile stretch of deep water was so punctuated with rocks as to make its navigation extremely dangerous for an inexperienced pilot.

"Is that an Indian home?" I asked, as we neared land again.

"Yes," said Mr. Cousins. He then explained that we were to hold our course until two cocoanut trees appeared between us and the Indian hut on the hill side. Then, we made a sharp turn and with lowered engine speed wended our way among rocks and shoals until we entered a beautiful little cove between two outstanding points of the shoreline, and anchored near a low white beach back of which was a grove of waving cocoanut palms, while a dense undergrowth of verdant grass and wild bananas encroached upon the narrow belt of sand. An Indian came out to the launch in a dug-out canoe and took us safely ashore. As soon as we reached the shallower water, willing hands seized the sides of the canoe and pulled it up on the beach so that we might step out on the dry sand.

Mr. Alphonse, accompanied by a few Indians, men, women and children, met us with the information that a Christian funeral was in progress. We followed him over the beach and up some rough steps cut out of the face of the hill and re-enforced

MR. ALPHONSE AND HIS CLASS OF VALIENTE INDIAN PREACHERS

W. C. TOWNSEND, APOSTLE TO THE CAKCHIQUELS, TWO INDIAN HELPERS, AND THE AUTHOR

with logs to prevent their being washed away by the heavy rains, until we came in sight of the chapel. As we neared the building the sound of moans and wailing reached our ears.

We found the sorrowing congregation seated within the chapel. The women mourners, having thrown some heavy pieces of clothing over their heads for a veil to cover their faces, sat near the rude coffin bewailing the loss of the departed one. We could not understand their expressions of grief, but they were interpreted to us as running something like this: "O, poor thing! O, poor thing! We did not realize that you were going to leave us so soon. You were so good, so good, and we are sorry to lose you. What will your wife and children do now?" All this was in a plaintive monotone.

Mr. Alphonse announced a hymn in their own tongue and immediately the moans and wailing ceased. The women remained seated, with bowed and covered heads, while the rest of the congregation took up the singing of the hymn. The tune was carried and well maintained by the young pupils of the Mission day-school. Both Mr. Cousins and I spoke a few words of comfort that were interpreted by Mr. Alphonse.

After the short service a procession was formed outside of the chapel led by Mr. Alphonse and Mr. Cousins, followed immediately by the bearers of the coffin. Very small ropes had been tied around the coffin and the Indians tried at first to carry it

by means of these. The cords cut their hands so that they were obliged to rest often, and to change hands every few steps. At my suggestion six of the men raised the coffin and carried it on their shoulders. We proceeded thus along the beach to a point where an opening had been cut, through the overarching tropical growth, to the spot on the hillside where the grave had been dug. Resting the coffin at the foot of the grave the bearers waited until all had gathered around. After the singing of a hymn, Mr. Cousins committed dust to dust and ashes to ashes.

Seven years before, when Mr. Surgeon and Mr. Alphonse first landed in the manner in which we had arrived, the father of this same man was being buried. A drunken crowd of men were gathered around the coffin imbibing quantities of rum and pouring out libations of the same fluid upon the coffin in order to appease and satisfy the spirit of the departed. Finally, when all had become too drunk to be able to walk steadily, they staggered off to the place of burial, carrying and dragging the body as best they could in their intoxicated condition. At the grave more rum was drunk and poured upon the coffin. What a contrast between conditions now and those prevailing seven years ago! The contrasts, however, between the present and the past are not confined to burial customs.

Seven years ago these Indians were shy and hard to reach. Not a man on the Peninsula could read.

They had no religion other than the belief in ghosts, spirits both good and evil and all to be feared. The influential men among them were the sorcerers, exorcists, or conjurors called "*sukyas*" to whom they went for the explanation of dreams, noises heard in the night, or any unusual happening.

All dreams, as well as many of the forest noises of the night were thought to be caused by ghosts. When the witch doctor was consulted regarding these he would advise either the abandonment of the house in which they were living or the holding of a wake. Under the direction of the witch doctor the members of the community would gather at the disturbed house and spend the time singing weird songs and drinking intoxicating liquors for five consecutive nights. During this time wood ants' nests, garlic and leek-tops and other ill-smelling herbs were kept burning on a slow fire, in order that the sickly smelling smudge might drive away the evil spirits. After this wake the house might again be safely inhabited for a time.

The tribe had formerly been practically nomadic. Because of their fear of spirits they lived in cheaply constructed huts consisting merely of thatched roofs supported on poles, without walls or floor, that could be easily torn down or abandoned at the suggestion of the witch doctor. With the disappearance of belief in the power of evil spirits, more substantial houses are being constructed. The first step toward better homes is the laying of a wood

floor at a short distance above the ground. Then follows the putting up of walls and partitions constructed at first of reeds. Then, as prosperity progresses, the money that they formerly spent for drink goes to buy boards and corrugated iron, from the traders in Bocas, which they bring in their canoes the thirty-five intervening miles. With this permanent character of the home follows naturally the planting of trees such as the bread fruit, cacao, mango and orange.

Nakedness of children was the rule a few years ago, while the grown people cared but little for clothing. Today, men, women and children are not only decently, but in many cases, attractively dressed, and one rarely sees even a naked child.

Community life has sprung into existence under the influence of the missionaries. The people from a distance are beginning to move nearer the point on which are located the church and school in order that they may be able to enjoy the advantages of both, and avail themselves of the sympathetic assistance of the missionary in time of sickness. Community games have awakened an interest. Mr. Alphonse supervised the clearing of a cricket ground on which the young men take great pleasure in exhibiting their skill.

Home life was practically unknown and infant mortality was excessive. More than half of those born died during the first year. Marriage, as we know it, was not practiced. Girls were sold as little

children to some man, and upon reaching puberty were taken by him to assist other women in providing for him the necessities of life; since in this, as in almost all other Indian tribes of the jungle in America, it is the women who do the drudgery while the man devotes himself to hunting, fishing, and making bows and arrows. Often the young girl would be very unhappy. She could not run home to her own people, as they would not receive her, but she would take the first opportunity to run away and join herself to some other man who was more attractive. So common was this custom that there is a peculiar word in the language for a woman friend who assists a man's wife to run away to another man. If any member of the tribe is a more than usually successful hunter or fisher, he has no difficulty in securing more wives than the others, since the young women run away to join him.

With the advent of the missionary has come Christian marriage and polygamy does not exist in the Christian community. Home life has been established. Conjugal love has developed and, with it a love for children that makes the parents anxious to preserve the lives of the little ones and willing to follow the advice of the missionaries in their treatment of them. So successful has been this help and teaching that during 1923 they had the remarkable record of saving every baby born in the community.

One of the first pupils of the little mission-school

was a boy of twelve or thirteen years of age, who lived at some distance. He attended but half of the day and would give no reason for not remaining for the afternoon session though repeatedly asked to do so. Finally, the teacher visited the Indian home and found that the boy was staying away from school in the afternoon in order to teach a man-grown brother what he had learned in the morning. It was found that the brother had already learned as much as the children in the school and had begun to teach those around him. Under the teaching of Mr. Alphonse the older brother soon became converted. He takes daily Bible lessons and has been accepted as a local preacher, going to some outstation every Sunday, he gives out to his people the things which he imbibes from contact with the missionary during the week.

While there are still many of the Indians who do not realize why the missionaries have given up their home in civilization and come to live among them, it is touching to see the expressions of gratitude on the part of those who do understand. It was known that I was there in the interests of the Society that was going to publish the "Good News" in their own language, and the day after my arrival gifts for me began to come into the missionary home, that the larder might not be empty during my visit to them. The men brought lobsters and fish; several women brought two eggs apiece; two brought chickens, and others brought yams, casava, bananas

and plantains. Even children came bringing in their little hands long pods of a leguminous tree containing bean-like seeds surrounded by a sweet-tasting pulp.

Shortly after my arrival I purchased some young coconuts, thinking it better to quench my thirst from this source rather than from the surface-water of the nearby stream. One day a man came to the house bringing five coconuts with the husk peeled down to the shell ready to open for drinking. When I asked him what I should pay him for them he replied in broken English learned from negro traders " Me glad you come, that for me bring coconut." Tears sprang unbidden at the thought of this simple demonstration of gratitude for the efforts being made after such a long delay on our part to take to these simple and responsive children of the jungle the message of our common Father's love.

There are many tangible evidences for which they and we have special reason for thankfulness at this time. On the extreme point of the peninsula, overlooking the beautiful bay and the island-studded Caribbean, there stands a simple thatched chapel, seating two hundred people, which is used also as a schoolhouse. This building was put up at the expense of the people themselves and by their own labor. Near this chapel-schoolhouse there is a smaller building that serves as a lodging place for Indians who come from a distance and remain for the evening service.

Six Indian converts come daily to the mission home to study the Bible and prepare to preach without pay to their fellows on the coming Sunday at the various points accessible by trail, and canoe. The Community is learning to read. There is a school enrolment of seventy children and an average attendance of fifty. Instruction up to the present has been given in Spanish, a language with which they are wholly unfamiliar. With what eagerness the missionaries and native converts anticipated the arrival of the Gospel in the language of the people.

"It is hard to wait, I am hungry for it!" said one of the Indian preachers to the Bible Society representative on his first visit.

This expressed hunger has been a spur to greater activity in pushing the work of the publication of the first Gospel for this particular tribe. With the many evidences of the regenerative power of the printed Word before us we cannot consistently relax our efforts while a single nation, tribe or tongue is left without the wonder-working Book of which we have never been deprived, but which they have never yet possessed.

INDEX

Ajpop, Don, 41-42
Ajpop, Mrs., 42
Alarcón, Isidoro, 15
Ayllón, Juan, 73-77
Ayllón, Tomasa, 76
Alphonse, E. S., and the Forest Indians of Panama, 78-88
American Baptist Mission, Salvador, 69
American Bible Society, 8, 17, 25, 41, 76, 78
Antigua, Guatemala, 13, 15, 21
Argueta, Don Flavio, 65-68
Argueta, José María, 65-68
Atitlán, Lake, 17, 46
Auto roads in Guatemala, 45-46

Badge of Serfdom, 58-63
Bible House, Cristobal, 78
Bishop, Rev. A. E., 21
Boarding school at San Antonio, 17
Bocas del Toro, 78
Bradley, Rev. Amos, 47
Burgess, Rev. Paul, Ph.D., and the Quiches, 20, 45-49, 55, 56

Cajahualten, Guatemala, 26
Cakchiquel Indian, 13
Cakchiquel Indians, 17, 18, 20, 21
  Growth of work among, 24
  Translation, 25
Cantel, Guatemala, 66
Central American Mission, 16, 21
Chapel built by Indians, 35, 57
Chapman, Rev. Percy T., 69, 70, 71, 72
Chicol, Felix, 35-37
Chiquimula, Guatemala, 73
Christian Endeavor World, 8
Christian Herald, 8
Christian Wedding and Baptism, La Union, 70
Comalapa, 32-34
Converted Temple Owner, a, 40
Corn (Maize) and Cakchiquels, 20
Cornstalk house, 22-23
Cousins, Rev. C. S., 79, 80
Cotom, Vicente, 50-51

Diaz, Francisco, 61, 62
Drink Cure in Guatemala, 65-67
Drunkard to Preacher, 35-36

El Heraldo, 69
El Salvador, 68
Evangelizing by Mail, 68-72

Foreword, 5-8
Friends, Society of, Guatemala, 73

Gregory, Rev. R. R., 78
Guajan, Cixto, 27-29, 37
Guatemala sends Missionary to Bolivia, 73-77
Guatemala, 7, 13, 58
Guatemala City, 58, 67

Haymaker, Rev. E. M., 53, 64, 67

Headstraps, 58-63
Honduras, 61
Hospital in San Antonio, 17

Indian Birthday celebration, 27
civilizations, 1
three types, 8
translators, 17
character, 19
idolotry, 33-34
Men's Club, 48
funeral, 80-82
Indians, exploitation of, 20
Key to Missionary situation in Guatemala, 19
Indian wake, 83

Ladino Church, Quezaltenango, 47
Ladinos, 20, 22, 40, 41, 54
La Union, Salvador, 68
Las Casas, 20
Long Wait, A, 34-35

Mail Order Convert, 70
Malmstrom, Miss E., 21
Medical Science, non-existent, 14
Memorized verses, power of, 26-31
Methodist Mission School, La Paz, Bolivia, 73
Mimeograph, Gospel of John, Printed on, 17
Mixed Congregation, A, 39
Mixed Race, among the, 64-72

Otzoy, Margarito, 37-38
Otzoy, Venturo, 34-35

Pagan City, A, 32-34
Panajachel, 26, 45, 58
Panajachel training school, 17
Panama, Valiente Indians of, 78-88
Patsum, 40-42
Persecution in Comalapa, 37-38
Persecution of Vicente Cotom, 51
Planter's Dilemma, A, 64-65
Poverty in Patsum, 40
Presbyterian Church in U. S., Foreign Mission Board of, 45
Price of daughters in Patsum, 40
Priests of Devil, 33
Priests of Sun, 33, 34
Primitive Methodist Mission, 47

Quezaltenango, 45, 47, 48, 49, 52, 56, 67
Quiches, 20, 45
Quiches, Some First Fruits of, 50-57

San Antonio (Aguas Calientes), Guatemala, 16, 26
San Antonio Boarding School, 17
San Antonio Hospital, 17
San Antonio Clinic, 17
San Felipe, Guatemala, 52, 55
San Miguel, Salvador, 69
Santa Catarina, Guatemala, 13, 16
Santa Maria, Guatemala, 52, 54
Santa Rita, Guatemala, 65
Scrap of Paper, a, starts things, 13-17
Silverio, 13, 14, 15, 16
Surgeon, Rev. M. C., 79, 82

Townsend, W. C., 18-25, 26, 30, 33, 38, 61
Training school, Panajachel, 17
Translation helper, 52

Translators, Indian, 17
Treichler, A. B., 26
Types of Indians (three), 8

Union Church of Canal Zone, 78

Valiente Indians, 78-88
Varetto, Juan, Rev., 50
Velasquez, Marcelino, 55-57
Villalta, Pedro, 68-72

Wages in Patsum, 40
Wife stealing, 32-33
Witch Doctor, 13, 14, 33, 52, 54, 83
Witch Doctor, exorcises snake, 42-44
Witch Doctor, wins Indian Chief, 52

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